

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – October 21, 2005

Keeping Washington Moving

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION FOR OUR STATE – On Thursday, the full Senate passed one of my bills to invest in our state and nation.

Earlier in the week on Monday, I helped introduce the \$141 billion bill that funds the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, the Judiciary, Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for 2006.

I helped draft the bill as the ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation. Our bill covers areas such as infrastructure, public housing, and the judiciary that are critical to millions of American families and to keeping our economy strong.

FLOOR SPEECH – In a Senate floor speech in support of the bill, I urged my colleagues to vote for this critical legislation. I believe that to make America strong again, we need to invest at home. We need to invest in our communities, in our schools, in our people, and in our infrastructure. This bill will allow us to:

- Fund continued rail service in our nation;
- Build new runways to relieve congestion at our airports;
- Construct new housing for low-income seniors and the disabled;
- Invest in community development;
- Provide needed assistance to taxpayers; and
- Aggressively enforce our drug laws.

By rejecting the misguided and painful cuts called for in the President's budget, our bill invests the funds to make our world safer and advance the needs of our infrastructure and our people. The bill passed the Senate 93-1 and now must be reconciled with the House version.

Watch video of my speech:

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=247550>

Investing in a Strong Workforce

On Thursday, I announced more than \$4.7 million in United States Department of Labor (DOL) community-based job training grants for two colleges in Washington state. The funding will help more than 600 Washingtonians for good-paying jobs in healthcare-related fields. As a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) and Senate Appropriations committees, I've been a strong advocate for funding for worker training programs.

SEATTLE: SEATTLE CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE -

The Seattle grant will be awarded to Seattle Central Community College in the amount of \$2,762,496 and will train over 500 participants. This grant will be used to build capacity within the community college and workforce development systems to better meet the training needs of the local healthcare industry in the areas of nursing, dental hygiene, and health care support services.

The project will recruit and hire high-quality instructors, expand clinical training opportunities to provide realistic learning experiences for students, provide training in English as a Second Language, and will provide basic skills to improve student retention and completion rates. It will also fund replacement of outdated clinical instruction equipment.

PASCO: COLUMBIA BASIN COLLEGE - The Pasco grant will be awarded to Columbia Basin College in the amount of \$1,992,675, and will train 124 program participants. The funding will be used to develop a healthcare Radiologic Sciences Training Program, featuring online curriculum,

certifications, and training equipment. It will also provide outreach and recruitment to K-12 schools, participants, and to the general public. Students completing the training programs will receive an A.A.S degree in Radiologic Sciences and/or certification in seven specialized areas.

I'm very pleased to have been able to secure this funding to strengthen our workforces in Seattle and Pasco. Now is the time to invest in creating the skilled, well-prepared workforce that will keep our state competitive in the future.

Fighting for Our Veterans

HELPING GUARD AND RESERVE VETS GET EMPLOYMENT –

Our Guard and Reserve members play an extremely important role for our country everyday – in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in communities all across our nation. Yet too many of these brave men and women are having difficulty finding work to support their families when they return home from their missions.

These troops have sacrificed so much for our nation, and I believe we owe it to them to ensure resources are available as they come home to help them continue school or re-enter the workforce. Unfortunately, the federal government is not doing a good enough job of getting the necessary information to them.

GUARD EMPLOYMENT HEARING - This week, as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety, I attended a hearing specifically dedicated to veterans' employment issues. At the hearing, I heard from Lisa Nisenfeld, the Executive Director of the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council in Vancouver and one of the workforce stars in Washington State. Under her leadership, workforce programs in the region have more than doubled their positive outcomes – and have become a key economic development resource for growing companies.

In her testimony, Ms. Nisenfeld made it clear that Guard members simply do not have enough information about the employment resources available to them. If the federal government did a better job of providing this essential information, our Guard troops would find the transition back to work – and home – much easier. That's why I'm looking forward to continuing to work with workforce leaders, employers, veterans, and advocates to see that our Guard members get the employment support they need.

VETS EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLES – As part of those efforts, over the past few weeks, I've held roundtable discussions in Spokane and Vancouver to hear concerns and help our veterans address the economic and employment challenges they face upon returning home. These discussions allowed me to hear from our veterans and to inform my work in the Senate, and they armed me with stories and experiences to share with my colleagues as I work to help our Guard and Reserve members get the benefits they've earned as part of their service to our nation.

Sign up to get periodic updates on my work for veterans:

<http://murray.senate.gov/vetupdates>

Take Action on FDA Handling of Plan B

I continue to be concerned that some at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are putting politics ahead of sound science. Nowhere has this dangerous trend been clearer than in the FDA's handling of over-the-counter status for the Plan B emergency contraceptive. Plan B was overwhelmingly recommended for approval by the FDA scientific advisory panel nearly two years ago. Yet, disturbingly, the agency continues to delay a decision on its OTC status because of politics and ideology.

You can sign a petition urging FDA action at:

<http://clinton.senate.gov/contact/petitions/planb.cfm>

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